IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of the claims replaces all prior listings of claims.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An information processing system comprising:

a first information processing apparatus;

a second information processing apparatus, installed in each of a plurality of areas, for authenticating said first information processing apparatus in a ~~target~~ predetermined area of said plurality of areas; and

a third information processing apparatus for providing content to said first information processing apparatus[[;]],

wherein,

said first information apparatus, said second information apparatus, and said third information processing apparatus being interconnected via a network[[;]],

~~wherein~~ said first information processing apparatus sends authentication information for authenticating a user and ~~preset~~ predetermined area information to said third information processing apparatus via said network[[;]],

said third information processing apparatus selects said second information processing apparatus corresponding to said predetermined area information obtained from said first information processing apparatus and sends said authentication information obtained from said first information processing apparatus to said selected second information processing apparatus via said network[[;]], and

said second information processing apparatus authenticates said first information processing apparatus on the basis of said authentication information received from said third information processing apparatus and sends authentication result information for said first information processing apparatus to said third information processing apparatus via said network.

2. (Original) The information processing system according to claim 1, wherein, if said third information processing apparatus determines that the authentication for said first

information processing apparatus is permitted by said second information processing apparatus on the basis of said authentication result information supplied from said second information processing apparatus, said third information processing apparatus receives user information for said first information processing apparatus from said second information processing apparatus via said network.

3. (Original) The information processing system according to claim 1, wherein said third information processing apparatus transfers each piece of information with said second information processing apparatus in each area by use of a common library.

4. (Original) The information processing system according to claim 1, wherein said second information processing apparatus transfers each piece of information with said third information processing apparatus by use of a common interface in each area.

5. (Currently Amended) An information processing apparatus comprising:

an acquiring ~~means~~ unit for acquiring authentication information for authenticating a user of first another information processing apparatus and ~~preset~~ predetermined area information from said first another information processing apparatus;

a selecting ~~means~~ unit for selecting second another information processing apparatus corresponding to said area information acquired by said acquiring ~~means~~ unit;

a sending ~~means~~ unit for sending, via ~~said~~ a network, said authentication information of said first another information processing apparatus acquired by said acquiring ~~means~~ unit to said second another information processing apparatus selected by said selecting ~~means~~ unit; and

a receiving ~~means~~ unit for receiving, via said network, authentication result information for said first another information processing apparatus from said second another information processing apparatus.

6. (Currently Amended) The information processing apparatus according to claim 5, further comprising:

a determining ~~means~~ unit for determining whether or not authentication for said first another information processing apparatus has been permitted by said second another information processing apparatus on the basis of said authentication result information received by said receiving ~~means~~ unit; wherein, if said authentication for said first another information processing apparatus is determined by said determining ~~means~~ unit to be permitted by said second another information processing apparatus, said receiving ~~means~~ unit receives user information corresponding to said first another information processing apparatus from said second another information processing apparatus via said network.

7. (Original) The information processing apparatus according to claim 5, wherein said area information is a language code and a country code.

8. (Currently Amended) The information processing apparatus according to claim 5, wherein said sending ~~means~~ unit and said receiving ~~means~~ unit are each configured by a library common to said second another information processing apparatus in each area.

9. (Currently Amended) An information processing method for an information processing apparatus for providing content, comprising the steps of:

acquiring authentication information for authenticating a user of first another information processing apparatus and ~~preset~~ predetermined area information from said first another information processing apparatus;

selecting second another information processing apparatus corresponding to said predetermined area information acquired by said acquiring step;

sending, via ~~said~~ a network, said authentication information of said first another information processing apparatus acquired by said acquiring step to said second another information processing apparatus selected by said selecting step; and

receiving, via said network, authentication result information for said first another information processing apparatus from said second another information processing apparatus.

10. (Currently Amended) An information processing apparatus comprising:

a receiving ~~means~~ unit for receiving, via a network, authentication information for authenticating a user of first another information processing apparatus located in a predetermined area from second another information processing apparatus, said second another information processing apparatus corresponding to said predetermined area;

an authenticating ~~means~~ unit for authenticating said first another information processing apparatus on the basis of said authentication information received by said receiving ~~means~~ unit; and

a sending ~~means~~ unit for sending, via said network, authentication result information for said first another information processing apparatus obtained by said authenticating ~~means~~ unit to said second another information processing apparatus.

11. (Currently Amended) The information processing apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said receiving ~~means~~ unit receives information about a request for user information corresponding to said first another information processing apparatus from said second another information processing apparatus; and said sending ~~means~~ unit sends said user information corresponding to said first another information apparatus to said second another information processing apparatus on the basis of the request information received by said receiving ~~means~~ unit.

12. (Currently Amended) The information processing apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said sending ~~means~~ unit and said receiving ~~means~~ unit are each configured by an interface common to all areas.

13. (Currently Amended) An information processing method for an information processing apparatus installed in each area, comprising the steps of:

receiving, via a network, authentication information for authenticating a user of first another information processing apparatus located in a predetermined area from second another information processing apparatus, said second another information processing apparatus corresponding to said predetermined area;

authenticating said first another information processing apparatus on the basis of said authentication information received by said receiving step; and

sending, via said network, authentication result information for said first another information processing apparatus obtained by said authenticating step to said second another information processing apparatus.

14. (Currently Amended) An information processing apparatus comprising:

a memory area control ~~means~~ unit for controlling the creation of a memory area corresponding to first another information processing apparatus accessed via a network;

a storage ~~means~~ unit for receiving a content ID from said first another information processing apparatus and storing said content ID into said memory area whose creation has been controlled by said memory area control ~~means~~ unit;

an issuing ~~means~~ unit for issuing a memory area ID of said memory area in which said content ID is stored and authentication permission information indicative of the authentication of said first another information processing apparatus;

a selecting ~~means~~ unit for selecting second another information processing apparatus corresponding to said first another information processing apparatus on the basis of area information of said first another information processing apparatus; and

a sending ~~means~~ unit for sending, via said network, said memory area ID and said authentication permission information issued by said issuing ~~means~~ unit to said first another information processing apparatus along with URL information of said second another information processing apparatus selected by said selecting ~~means~~ unit.

15. (Currently Amended) The information processing apparatus according to claim 14, wherein, in response to a request for information of said memory area corresponding to said memory area ID received from said second another information processing apparatus, said sending ~~means~~ unit sends said content ID from said memory area to said second another information processing apparatus via said network; in response to a request for content information corresponding to said content ID received from said second another information processing apparatus, said sending ~~means~~ unit sends said content information to said second

another information processing apparatus via said network; and in response to said request for content corresponding to said content ID received from said second another information processing apparatus, said sending ~~means~~ unit sends said content to said second another information processing apparatus via said network.

16. (Currently Amended) The information processing apparatus according to claim 14, wherein said sending ~~means~~ unit is configured by an interface common to said second another information processing apparatus in each area.

17. (Currently Amended) The information processing apparatus according to claim 14, wherein, if said content ID received from said first another information processing apparatus has not been stored in said memory area by said storage ~~means~~ unit or if the deletion of said memory area corresponding to said memory ID has been requested by said second another information processing apparatus, said memory area control ~~means~~ unit controls the deletion of said memory area corresponding to said first another information processing apparatus.

18. (Original) An information processing method comprising the steps of:

controlling the creation of a memory area corresponding to first another information processing apparatus accessed via a network;

receiving a content ID from said first another information processing apparatus and storing said content ID into said memory area whose creation has been controlled by said memory area control step;

issuing a memory area ID of said memory area in which said content ID sent from said first another information processing apparatus is stored and authentication permission information indicative of the authentication of said first another information processing apparatus;

selecting second another information processing apparatus corresponding to said first another information processing apparatus on the basis of area information of said first another information processing apparatus; and

sending, via said network, said memory area ID and said authentication permission information issued by said issuing step to said first another information processing apparatus along with URL information of said second another information processing apparatus selected by said selecting step.

19. (Currently Amended) An information processing apparatus comprising:

a receiving ~~means~~ unit for receiving, from first another information processing apparatus, via a network, a memory area ID corresponding to said first another information processing apparatus in second another information processing apparatus and authentication permission information indicative of being authenticated by said second another information processing apparatus, said second another information processing apparatus being selected on the basis of area information of said first another information processing apparatus;

an acquiring ~~means~~ unit for acquiring, on the basis of said memory area ID and said authentication permission information received by said receiving ~~means~~ unit, a content ID stored in a memory area corresponding to said memory area ID and content information corresponding to said content ID from said second another information processing apparatus via said network; and

a sending ~~means~~ unit for sending said content information acquired by said acquiring ~~means~~ unit to said first another information processing apparatus.

20. (Currently Amended) The information processing apparatus according to claim 19, further comprising:

a determining ~~means~~ unit for determining, when said receiving ~~means~~ unit has received an instruction for purchasing a sale service of said content ID from said first another information processing apparatus, whether or not said instruction for purchasing said sale service corresponding to said content ID has been received by said receiving ~~means~~ unit [[;]],

wherein,

if said instruction for purchasing said sale service corresponding to said content ID is found received by said determining ~~means~~ unit, said acquiring ~~means~~ unit acquires said content

corresponding to said content ID from said second another information processing apparatus via said network.